

I'm going to begin today, with a little re-cap of last week. And the reason for that, is because Jesus has been teaching, and today He's continuing to teach. He finishes one sentence, and begins another. There's no change in location; There's no change in circumstance; there's no narration to suggest that we're moving onto another topic... And yet, it's surprisingly easy, for us to miss this, because our Bibles (to make it easier to find stuff) insert a whole lot of headings all over the place.

And so, in Chapter 11 of my Bible, it has the headings:

- The Lord's Prayer;
- Jesus & Beelzebul;
- Return of an Unclean Spirit;
- True Blessedness;
- The Sign of Jonah;

And now we've got the heading:

- The Light in you.

And the thing is, whenever we come to a new heading, we usually assume we're moving onto a different topic, but often we're not.

You see, not one of these headings were inserted by Luke. The publishers have put them there, to help us to navigate, and that's not a bad thing – we just have to be aware of it..., because the problem is, the headings cause us 'disconnect' the bit before the heading, from the bit after the heading.

And in **this** case, we certainly shouldn't do that – they belong together.

Alright, so here's the re-cap:

The crowds are growing – they're wanting to see the signs and wonders, But Jesus basically says, "The only sign you're going to get, is the sign of Jonah".

And that's like a 2-fold sign:

1. Jonah preached the word of God, "repent of sin, to be saved", and Nineveh responded to this. But one **greater** than Jonah is here (**Jesus**). **Jesus** is great. Listen to **Him**. Don't hold back, hoping you're going to see another sign. We're saved by faith – We're not saved by signs, so believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and be saved.
2. And the 2nd part of the sign of Jonah, is Jonah was in the belly of the fish for 3 days, Jesus would be in the ground for 3 days, so the 2nd sign is the death and resurrection of Jesus...

And V32 (from last week), concluded (and then I'm going to follow straight on into v33): So, V ³² **The men of Nineveh will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and behold, something greater than Jonah is here.**

³³ **"No one after lighting a lamp puts it in a cellar or under a basket, but on a stand, so that those who enter may see the light.**

You see, it's not a separate topic – it continues on. The word “behold” means “look”.

LOOK!!! something greater than Jonah is here.

³³ “No one after lighting a lamp puts it in a cellar or under a basket, but on a stand, so that those who enter may see the light.

LOOK!!! SEE!!! – it's all part of the one message.

Jesus was proclaiming the Word of God. And **His** teaching, and His preaching:– it wasn't done in secret. He didn't hide away and whisper His teaching in the underground...:

- He went to the streets; and
- He taught in the Synagogues;
- He gathered crowds on the side of a mountain;
- And He gave them a picnic;
- He used a boat as a stage, so the people on the shore could hear...

Jesus is the lamp, shining the Gospel (the Word of God), out into the dark world... It was plain as day, for everyone to see...

No need for further signs and wonders – something greater than Jonah is here – can you not see this (That's what Jesus was saying)....

You see, in the Gospel of Matthew, there's a similar metaphor (of a light on a stand), but in Matthew, **we** are the light –

Disciples of Jesus are the light. And we'll get to that point in Luke too, but not yet. At this point, Jesus is telling us that **He** didn't keep the Gospel hidden – **He is** the light – on a stand, for everyone to see....

Are you with me???

And so, it should be obvious, that someone great has come... And YKW, even Jesus' sacrifice on the cross: – **that** wasn't kept hidden either... The light on the lampstand (Jesus on the cross), was snuffed out, and even the sun went dark.

Let's move on.

In V34, the focus shifts from Jesus (and the word of Jesus), to how that word is perceived, and received. It shifts from the lamp on the stand, to the eye of the beholder...

And this is where it can get a little bit hard to understand, because it's a mixing of metaphors.

34 Your eye is the lamp of your body.

Whaaaatttt???? “Your eye is the lamp of your body????”

I've just recently had my cataracts removed, and I now have, interocular lenses... My lenses were getting cloudy/opaque, and so everything was dull. I was putting brighter and brighter lights in the house, and I think the next step was to put some football lights in the house, like they have up on the stands in the Gabba.... And Robyn thought, a better idea,

would be to have my lenses replaced. And now the lights are plenty bright enough...

But a side effect, is when the light is shining in just the right direction, Robyn tells me my eyes sparkle... And I sorta picture like, you know how the gallant and virtuous superhero (ding) has a sparkle in his teeth or in his eye,,,,, But no, Robyn tells me the glint is more like a creepy animated teddy-bear in a horror movie...

I can't win, can I....

But is that what it means, for the eye to be a lamp – that it sparkles out.... No...

Think of it, in terms of a camera...

The light enters a camera, through a lens... And what the picture actually records (Some of you old people will remember something called “film”)... For you younger folk, “film” is something that, if you put in your camera, and you could get 24 or 36 exposures, on a film... But you would ration them, because they were expensive. To buy a film, and get it developed and the photos printed, that would cost me more than ½ a Day's wages to get 36 photos.... And so I would ration them, and so if I wasn't on holidays, it might take me 6 months before I finished the film up, and I'd get the photos back, and I'd forgotten why I'd taken that photo.

*Oh, but how good it was, with the invention of a digital camera... And that's right young people, we used to have cameras **and** phones... A camera on your phone, how ridiculous – you think we're the Jetsons – And unless you*

were Maxwell Smart, your phone was wired into your house....

I'm digressing...

But the light enters a camera, thorough a lens... And the quality of the lens, determines the quality of the photo.

If the lens:

- *is all smudged, the photo will be smudged.*
- *is tinted, the photo will be darkened*
- *is yellow, it removes the blue, and the photo will **be** yellow;*
- *is green, it removes all the red, and so something that's red, will look black;*

And some lenses will distort the photo:

- *a fish-eye lens, changes the perspective;*
- *as does a telephoto lens...*

Are you with me???

*The light enters a camera, through its lens, and it depends on the **lens**, as to whether the light is good (whether it's true),,,,,, or, whether it's distorted – whether the colour is distorted, or whether the brightness or the contrast is distorted, or whether the shape of the picture itself is distorted...*

And your eye has a lens as well – it does exactly the same thing as a lens on a camera. Our vision, is light that has passed through our lens, and the lens focuses it on our retina...

- I had a cataract. My sight was distorted – everything was darkened, and at night time, a streetlight would have a halo around it.
- Some of you are long-sighted – your lens distorts things, and so what you see, is out of focus. And you need glasses, to correct the focus, so you can read something that's close.
- Some of you, are short-sighted – your lens distorts things, so that things that are far away, don't come into focus, and so you might have to wear glasses while you drive.
- Some of you have astigmatism, and so, round circles look more like an oval, and you need glasses to correct the astigmatism.

Fascinating stuff, but of course, Jesus isn't talking about light and optics and optometry.... He's talking about our **spiritual** perspective.

So, when He says:

³⁴ Your eye is the lamp of your body. When your eye is healthy, your whole body is full of light, but when it is bad, your body is full of darkness. He's talking about how we perceive, spiritual truth...

You see, when the Word of God is proclaimed, we filter it through a lens. And if that lens is **good**, we will receive the truth, and we will believe the truth, and we will surrender to the truth, and be transformed by the truth, and our whole body,

will be **filled** with the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ....
(and that's a good thing)

But if we filter what we hear, through a lens that is **not** good – through a lens that is clouded, or distorted, it won't be pure light that comes in – the Word will be:

- discoloured;
- shadowed;
- twisted;
- contorted;
- muddled;

And as Jesus said:

When your eye is healthy, your whole body is full of light, but when it is bad, your body is full of darkness.

So:

How we respond to the Word of God (and how we respond to Jesus), depends on our perception... One must receive the Light, and not distort the Light, to be light.

I'll say that again:

One must receive the Light, and not distort the Light, to be light.

Now, when it comes to “spiritual perception”, there's 2 ways, for the light that we take in, to be “bad light”...

1.

The first way, is to be attracted, to the wrong light in the first place...

Every photographer knows, that to capture a true image, the light's gotta be good... If you want to capture an image of someone, but the light behind them is really bright, they'll be a dark shadow, and the light just blows out the image.

Or, if you take a photo under fluorescent lights, the colour-temperature will be wrong – You've gotta look at the right sort of light.

And when it comes to “spiritual perception”, probably the most common way to take in “darkness”, is to be **attracted** to darkness in the first place...

You see, there's 2 types of filters on lenses – some truly “filter” – they take stuff out... They take out certain colours – they take out certain wave-lengths in the light-spectrum; they take out brightness and leave darkness...

And a darkened perception, isn't attracted to the true light of Christ – A darkened perception, only wants to hear what the flesh craves...

I am astounded at the places people **will** look for spiritual truth today:

- Eastern religions;
- Buddha;
- Hinduism;
- Yoga;

- Bahai
- It's even trendy now, to embrace Islam,,
but Jesus???? Oh, no....

Look at the way religions are portrayed in the media.... They tip-toe around all the others, and Christians, they wallop with a hammer...

A darkened perception, is not attracted to the true light of Christ...

But even within the Christian church, a darkened perception, is not attracted to the true light of the Word of Christ....

When Paul wrote to Timothy, he said:

2 Timothy 4:3–4 (ESV)

³ For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, ⁴ and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths.

Paul said, “That time is coming”. Well, I can tell you, that time is well and truly here. Especially with the advent of the internet – you can find whatever teaching your flesh wants to hear. And a darkened spiritual perception, won't listen to the truth – it filters the truth out – “I don't want to hear that stuff” – I want to hear **this!!!**

So for example:

Some folk never want to hear about “sin”, and they certainly don’t want to be convicted of their own “sin”, and so they find a teacher who never mentions it. They might talk about:

- challenges;
- circumstances;
- struggles you have in your life;

They may even talk about

- addictions;

but at no point, will they speak the truth and name it as a “sin” to be repented of – as a rebellion against God within you...

Or another example, the big one I keep on addressing, because it is the major heresy of today, and that’s the prosperity Gospel and the word-faith teaching that goes along with it— That message that claims “God wants you to prosper in this life”, and the message that by faith, you can have a breakthrough – you can have health, wealth, and a long life – you’ve just gotta speak it into being...

And some folk will only listen to a bible teacher who will tell them, what their flesh wants to hear. And what’s the flesh want to hear? “God’s going to give you lots of enjoyable stuff, and lots of good times...” And they never want to hear the Word of Jesus that says:

- “**Woe** to you richⁱ”,
- or that bit in 1 Timothy that says that craving money takes people away from the faith, and they pierce themselves with many griefsⁱⁱ...

- And they don't want to hear that bit that Jesus said, that it's really hard for a rich man to get to heaven – about as hard as getting a camel through the eye of a needle;
- And they never want to hear the bit where Jesus said that whoever seeks to preserve his life will lose itⁱⁱⁱ,
- or that pesky promise that Jesus made that we would be persecuted^{iv}...

And so, some folk will filter **who** they listen to, and will only listen to a teacher, who won't teach those bits of God's truth that they don't want to hear....

Even with the Christian church, a darkened perception, will not take in the light of the truth of God's word – A darkened perception, doesn't even want to hear it...

Take in darkness, and there will be darkness inside.

2.

The **second** way for the light that we take in, to be “bad light”, is for the lens to **distort** the Word of God that we **do** hear...

Do you get the difference here? The first way to take in darkness, is to reject the word of God – to filter it out. The second way, is to **distort** the word of God – to twist it; and to colour it; and to **dim** it, so that it's no longer truth.

There's been a few times when we've had (and I'm glad to say they were only visitors), but we've had visitors come to church, and we've read the Scriptures, and I've taught on the Word of God, and they've come up to me afterwards, and said:

Oh, great message. I fully agree with you, and then they'll share some crazy interpretation of the Scripture that they hold dear, and how I was spot-on with their understanding....

And I just want to go, "How could you possibly get that, out of that bible reading?????" And more to the point, I said pretty much the opposite of what you're saying... Were you not listening at all???

Well yes, they were listening, but as the Scriptures were being read, and the whole time that I was teaching, the truth light of God's word was entering them through a distorted lens, and being clouded; and darkened; and twisted; and contorted... Until it was so re-shaped and re-coloured, that they could then interpret it, to what the flesh wanted to hear, ...

And so, what began as light, was twisted and dimmed into darkness...

And that's why Jesus says: ³⁵ **Therefore be careful lest the light in you be darkness.**

Be careful – we need to take care. Spiritual perception – how we perceive God's Word, can be quite deceptive... And how

we perceive Jesus, can be deceptive... And so, we need to be careful, otherwise we end up being filled with darkness...

How could those so-called Christians at Wieambilla possibly believe that it was a godly thing to lie in wait, and to murder police officers???? They listened only to teaching that lined up with their own crazy ideas, and they twisted the Scriptures to justify what they wanted to do (evil)...

How could a Christian church today, possibly think that it's OK for a man to marry another man? I'll tell you how: They won't listen, to what God says on the matter, and they twist other bits of the Scriptures, to fit their own agenda. And as they read the word of God, in some twisted way, in their eyes, it's agreeing with what they want to believe.

Or how could a church pastor possibly believe it was godly for him to live in a mansion and fly in a private jet, while millions of God's people can't afford to feed their families today??? And why should I pick on the pastors? What about the rest of us???

It's because we filter out what God has to say on giving to the poor, and we twist the Scriptures to say that "We're being blessed by God"...

Or, how could a Christian man justify beating his wife, or having an affair???? By filtering out what God says about submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ, and by filtering out the bit where God's word says, "Husbands, love your wives like Christ loved the church", and then. twisting the Scriptures to make others submit to them....

Now, they're all extreme examples I've given, but you've got the point, haven't you???

be careful lest the light in you be darkness.

How we perceive God's word, determines whether we're taking in light, or darkness.

So, how bright are ya?

I'm not asking you how smart you are, or how educated you are. I'm asking how bright you are. Are you bright? Or are you dull?

One must receive the Light, and not distort the Light, to be light.

What we are, is related to what we take in, and what we accept as true.

A spiritually healthy person, is **filled** with light; **walks** in the light; and radiates light...

And so, Jesus is the lamp on the lampstand. **His** teaching isn't hidden. And if we accept His teaching (without distorting the teaching), we are filled with His light, and we radiate His light....

What's the light? The teaching of Jesus...

And so, in every generation, the Word of God is proclaimed. It's not hidden. **We** put it out there, to proclaim the greatness of Christ. And in doing so, we continue being that light on the stand.

Questions?

ⁱ Luke 6:24

ⁱⁱ 1 Timothy 6:10

ⁱⁱⁱ Luke 17:33

^{iv} Mark 10:30